BLACK BOLT™

#1

MARVEL

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BLACK BOLT

is—or was—the king of the Inhumans, an off-splinter of humanity experimented upon by the alien Kree. With the help of Terrigen, a chemical that unlocks keys in their DNA, Inhumans can wield many shapes and powers. But these incredible gifts sometimes come with a price.

Black Bolt's voice can shatter mountains and level cities. It has killed many, including his own parents. It drove his brother, Maximus, insane.

But it has saved countless others. When the Silent King speaks, the world hears him.

When the Mad Titan Thanos raided the Inhuman city Attilan, Black Bolt set off a bomb that destroyed the city and spread Terrigen across the planet, seemingly dying in the process. The result was an explosion in the Inhuman population as Terrigen activated latent DNA in seemingly human individuals, but many died during their transformations, and Terrigen proved deadly to the planet's mutants.

When Black Bolt returned—freed from the mind-control of his mad brother Maximus, who had stolen him away after the battle with Thanos—his people no longer trusted him. And neither did his Queen, Medusa. The Silent King abdicated his throne and set out to redeem himself.

So how the hell did he wind up here?

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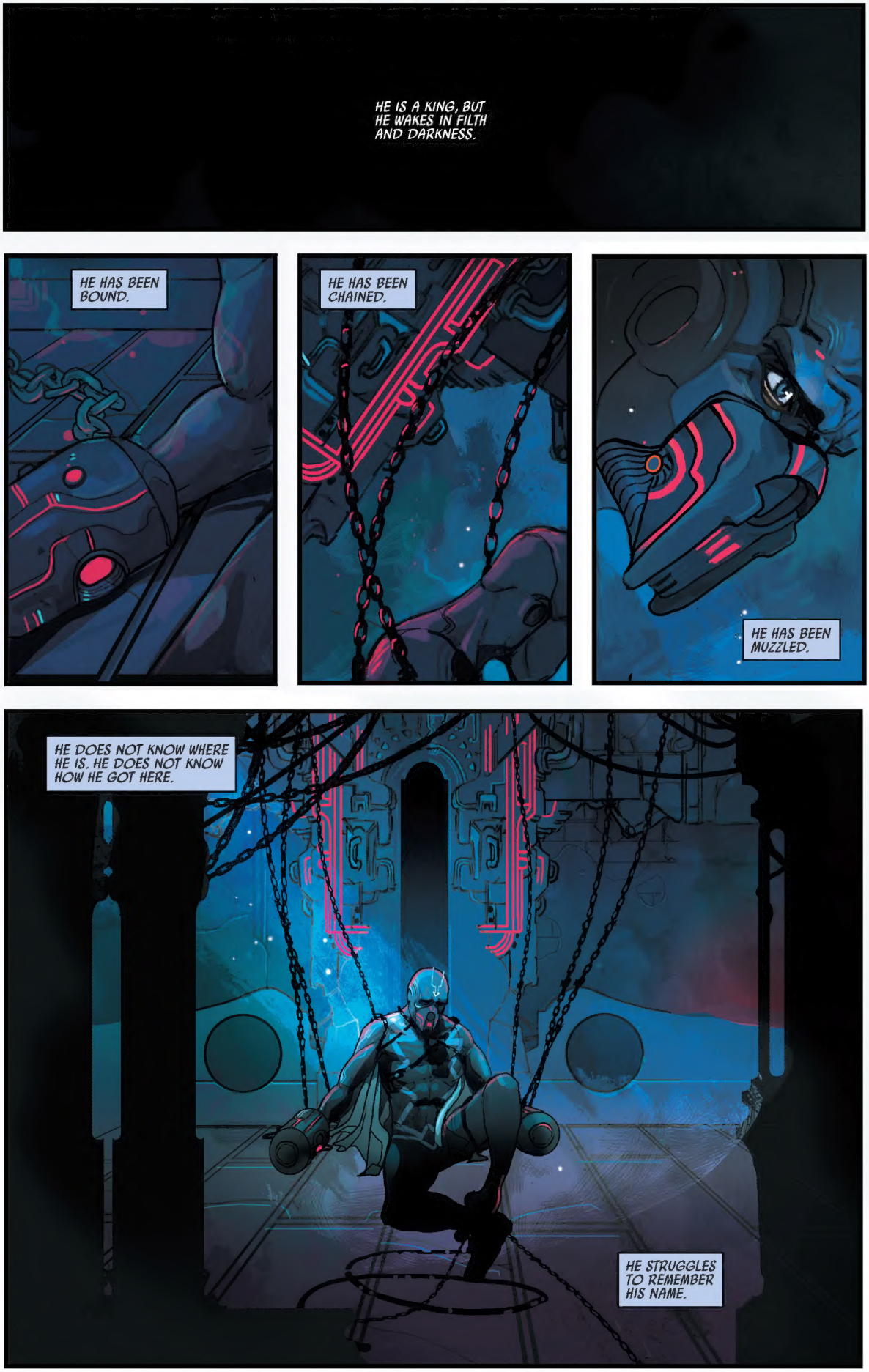
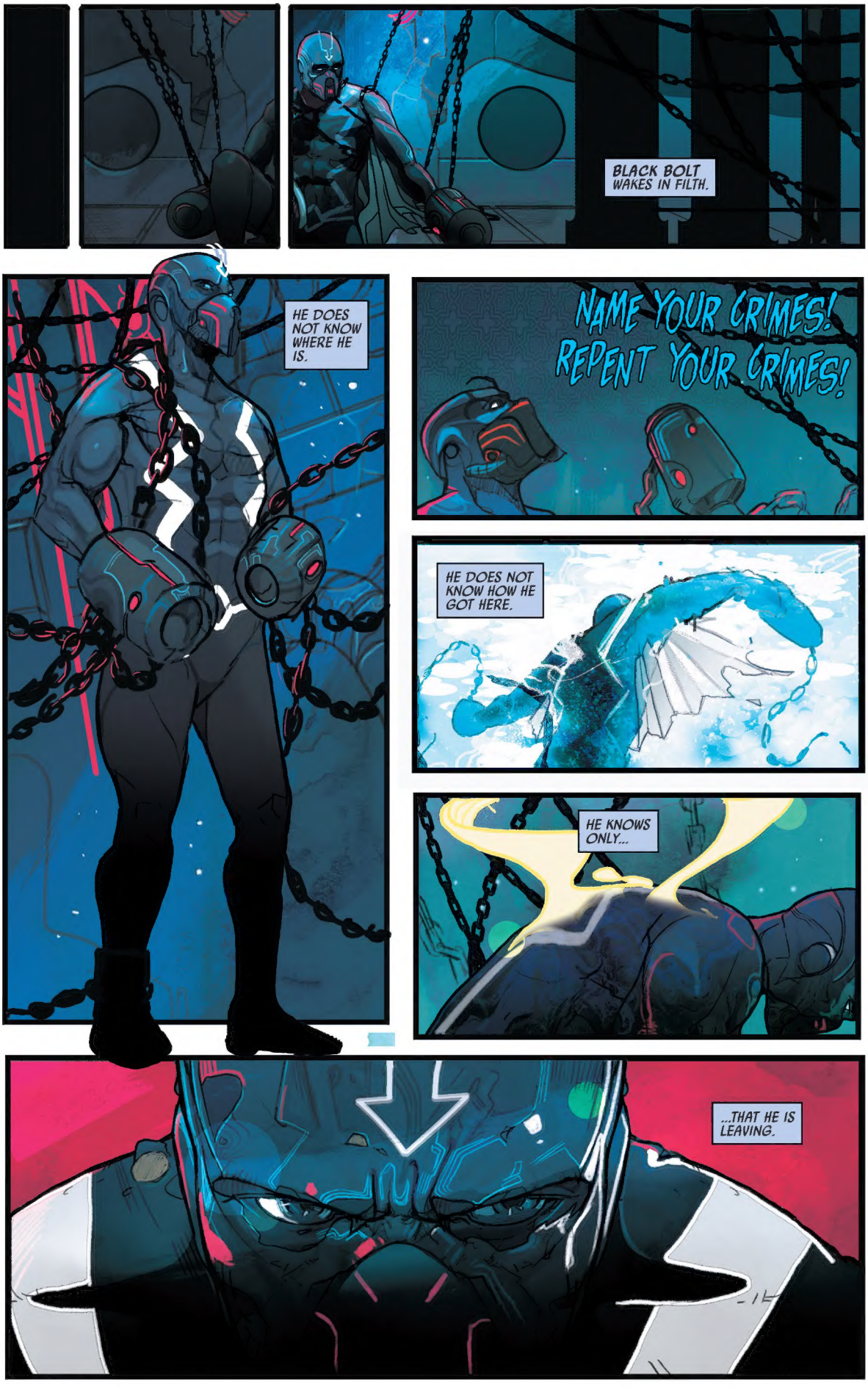
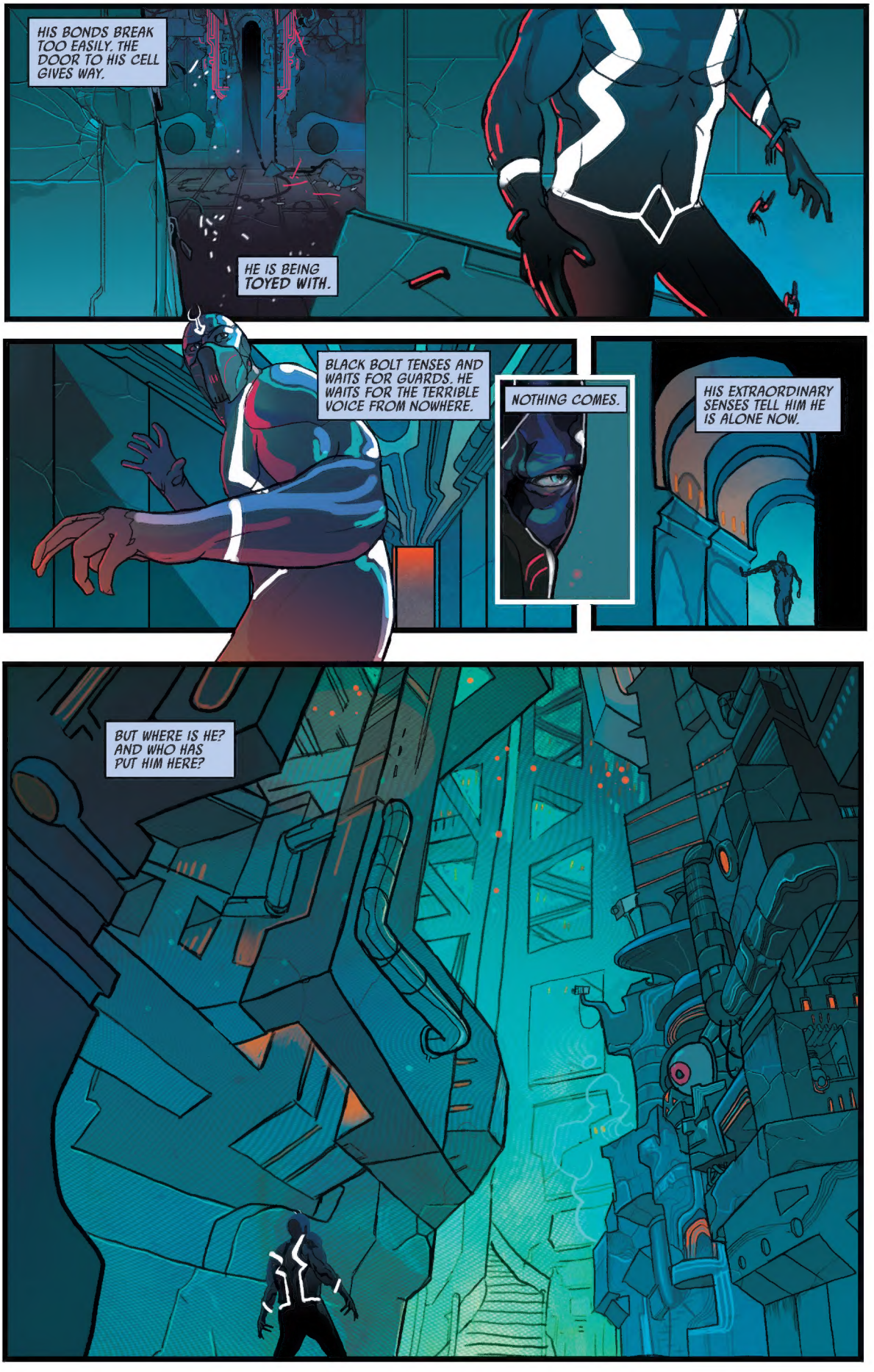

HE IS A KING, BUT HE WAKES IN FILTH AND DARKNESS.
HE HAS BEEN BOUND.
HE HAS BEEN CHAINED.
HE HAS BEEN MUZZLED.
HE DOES NOT KNOW WHERE HE IS. HE DOES NOT KNOW HOW HE GOT HERE.
HE STRUGGLES TO REMEMBER HIS NAME.

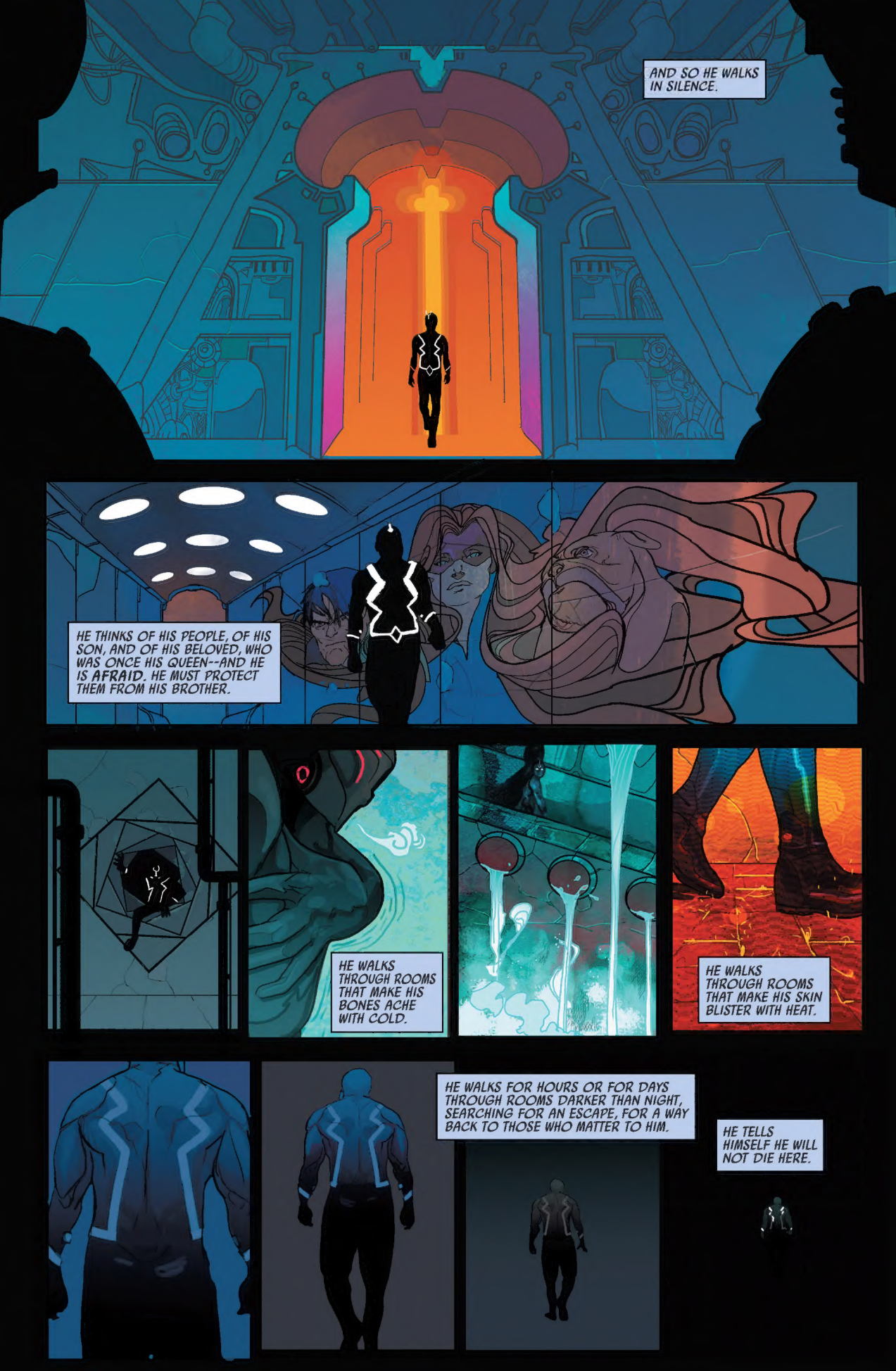
NAME YOUR CRIMES!
REPENT YOUR CRIMES!
NAME YOUR CRIMES!
REPENT YOUR CRIMES!
CRIMES? HE IS NO CRIMINAL...
...HE IS A HERO...
...A KING...

HE IS A KING, BUT HE WAKES IN FILTH AND AGONY.
HE IS BOUND.
HE IS CHAINED.
HE IS MUZZLED.
NAME YOUR CRIMES!
REPENT YOUR CRIMES!
HE IS NO CRIMINAL! HE IS BLACKAGAR BOLTAGON...
...A KING.


BLACK BOLT WAKES IN FILTH.
HE DOES NOT KNOW WHERE HE IS.
NAME YOUR CRIMES! REPENT YOUR CRIMES!
HE DOES NOT KNOW HOW HE GOT HERE.
HE KNOWS ONLY...
...THAT HE IS LEAVING.


HIS BONDS BREAK TOO EASILY. THE DOOR TO HIS CELL GIVES WAY.
HE IS BEING TOYED WITH.
BLACK BOLT TENSES AND WAITS FOR GUARDS. HE WAITS FOR THE TERRIBLE VOICE FROM NOWHERE.
NOTHING COMES.
HIS EXTRAORDINARY SENSES TELL HIM HE IS ALONE NOW.
BUT WHERE IS HE? AND WHO HAS PUT HIM HERE?

BLACK BOLT HAS BEEN HELD CAPTIVE BEFORE. BY THE SKRULLS. BY THE MAD TITAN THANOS. BY THE X-MEN.
BY HIS BROTHER.
AND THEN THE MEMORY HITS BLACK BOLT LIKE A FIST. HIS BROTHER. MAXIMUS, THE WOULD-BE USURPER.
BLACK BOLT AND HIS ONCE QUEEN MEDUSA HAD PLANNED TO SEND MAXIMUS TO A SECRET PRISON, KNOWN ONLY TO THE ROYAL FAMILY.
BUT INSTEAD, USING AN IMAGE INDUCER, MAXIMUS SWITCHED PLACES WITH HIM, AND NOW BLACK BOLT IS THE PRISONER.
HE IS ONE OF THE MOST POWERFUL BEINGS ON EARTH. BUT HERE HIS POWER FAILS HIM.
AND HIS CAPTOR KNOWS HIM. KNOWS THAT HIS WHISPER CAN BLOW OPEN WALLS AND HIS SHOUT CAN LEVEL CITIES. THE MUZZLE DOESN'T BREAK THE WAY HIS BONDS DID.


AND SO HE WALKS IN SILENCE.
HE THINKS OF HIS PEOPLE, OF HIS SON, AND OF HIS BELOVED, WHO WAS ONCE HIS QUEEN--AND HE IS AFRAID. HE MUST PROTECT THEM FROM HIS BROTHER.
HE WALKS THROUGH ROOMS THAT MAKE HIS BONES ACHE WITH COLD.
HE WALKS THROUGH ROOMS THAT MAKE HIS SKIN BLISTER WITH HEAT.
HE WALKS FOR HOURS OR FOR DAYS THROUGH ROOMS DARKER THAN NIGHT, SEARCHING FOR AN ESCAPE, FOR A WAY BACK TO THOSE WHO MATTER TO HIM.
HE TELLS HIMSELF HE WILL NOT DIE HERE.

THEN HE HEARS THE SCREAM.
AAAAAAAAAA
IT IS A GIRL'S VOICE, A SHRIEK OF PURE PAIN.
IT IS THE SOUND OF TORTURE.
HE RUNS NOW, DESPITE HIS EXHAUSTION.
NAME YOUR CRIMES!
REPENT YOUR CRIMES!
SHE IS LITTLE MORE THAN A CHILD.

HE IS TOO LATE.
YER A GOOD EGG TO TRY AND HELP BLINKY. BUT YOU SHOULD BE WORRYIN' ABOUT YERSELF.

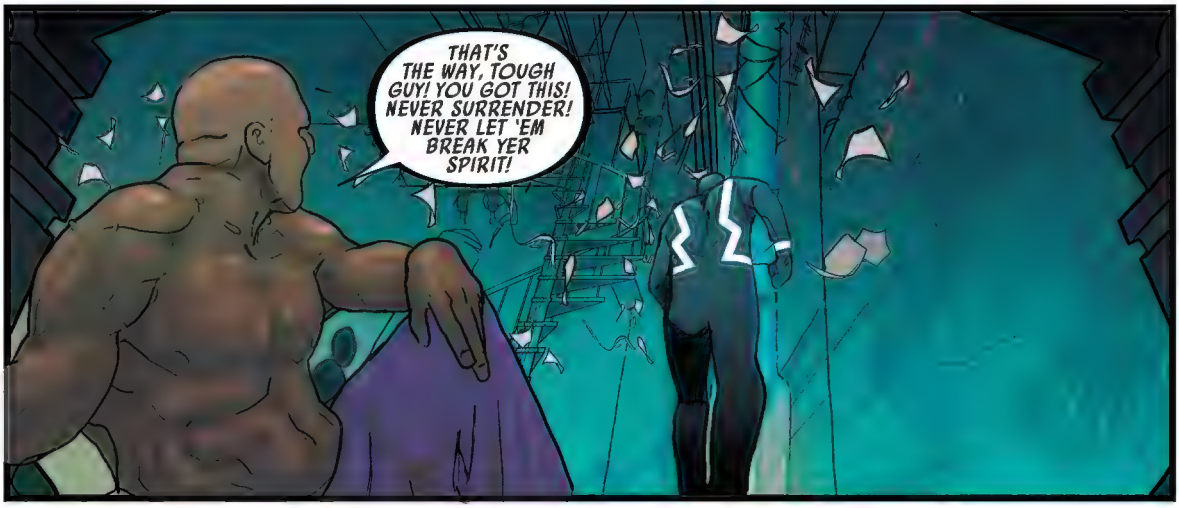
NAME'S CREEL.
I'M HERE TO BREAK YER FACE.

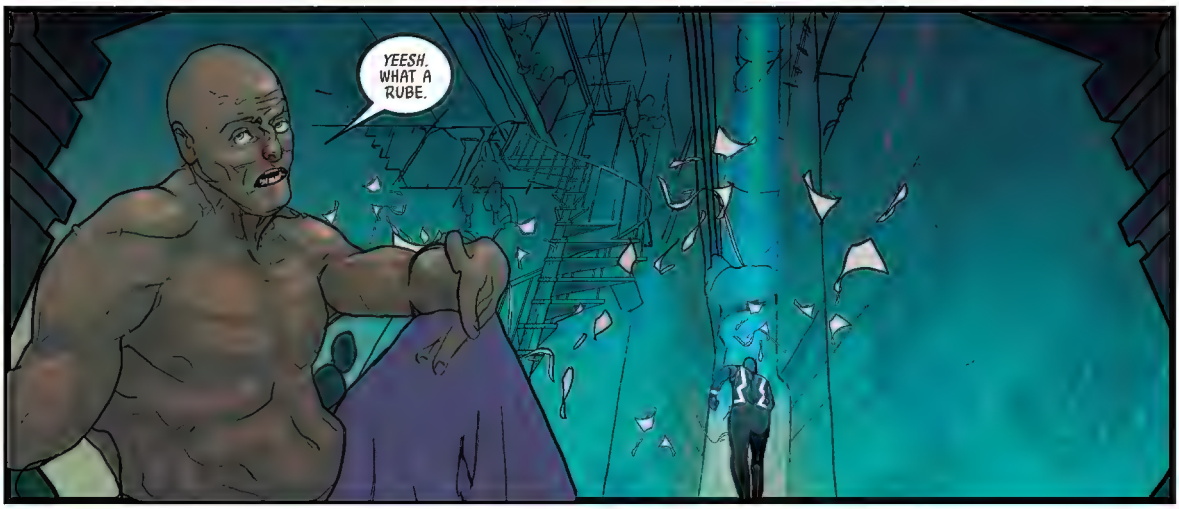
YOU WANT THE GUY WHO RUNS THIS PLACE? HE'S DOWN THERE.
BUT YOU GOTTA GO THROUGH ME TO GET TO HIM.
HE IS BLACKAGAR BOLTAGON. A KING. HIS BLOODLINE IS THE PUREST ATTILAN HAS EVER KNOWN.
HE IS WORTH A HUNDRED MEN SUCH AS THIS.
ISN'T HE?
THAT DOOHICKEY ON YER HEAD NOT WORKIN'? WAS IT SUPPOSED TO ZAP ME OR SOMETHIN'? HEH. DON'T WORRY, IT HAPPENS TO LOTS OF GUYS.
TAKE ME, FER INSTANCE. BACK HOME I'M THE AMAZING ABSORBING MAN. NOT IN HERE. BUT IN HERE I'M STILL...

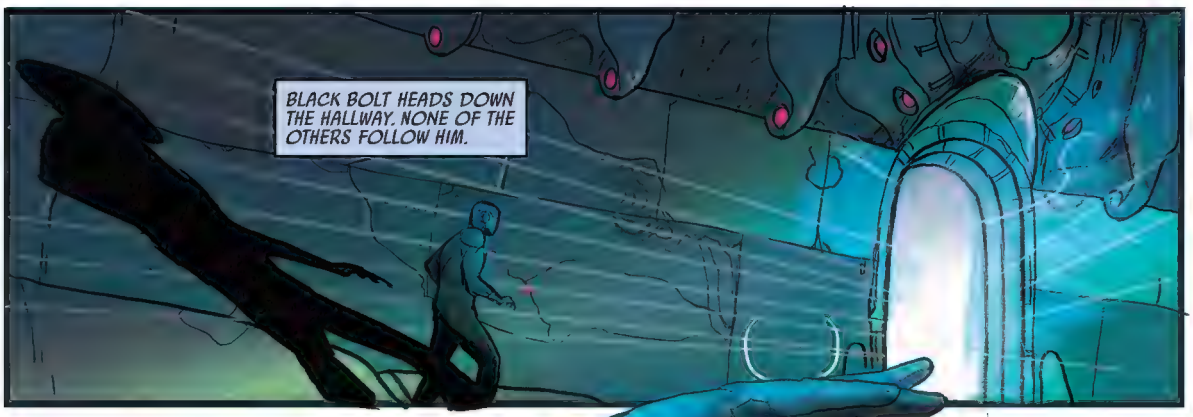
CRUSHER!
GOOD KICK. LEMME ASK YOU SOMETHING, THOUGH, "WISHBONE"...
...IS IT HARD AT THANKSGIVING?
ALL THE KIDS KNOCKIN' YOU DOWN, YANKIN' ON YER FOREHEAD, TRYIN' TO MAKE A WISH? I BET IT'S HARD.

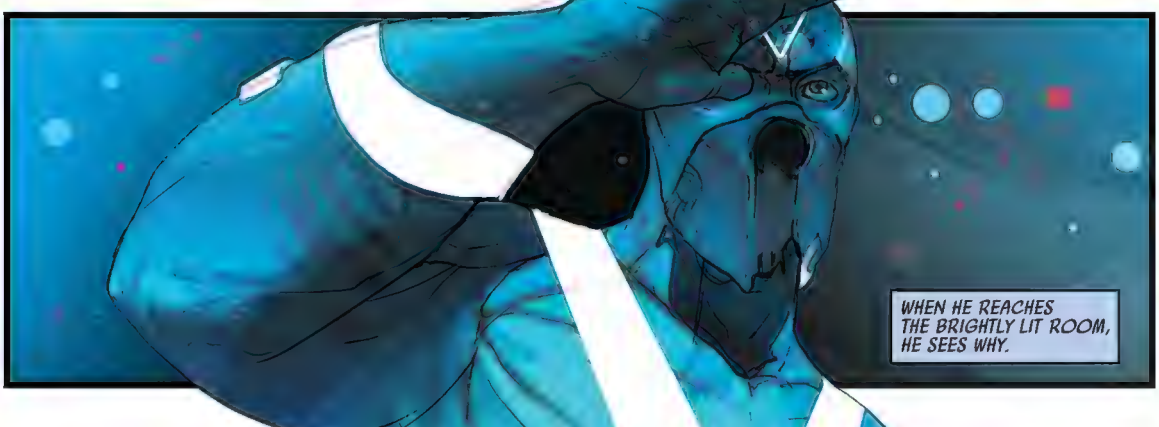
YOU KNOW THIS ONE, MOLYB?
BLACKAGAR BOLTAGON, CALLED BLACK BOLT. ONE OF THE MOST DANGEROUS MEN ON A PLANET FULL OF DANGEROUS MEN. AN ANGRY WORD FROM HIM CAN SHATTER A MOUNTAIN.
YOU THINK HE'LL JOIN US?
I THINK HE WILL FIND HE HAS LITTLE CHOICE.
HMPH. HE FIGHTS GOOD FOR AN EARTHER. BUT LET'S SEE HOW HE DOES WHEN THE JAILER DESTROYS HIM.
AGREED.

YEEE-OW! LOOKS LIKE THAT GIMP MASK JUST SAVED YER FACE, PAL.
IS THAT PART OF YOUR COSTUME OR ARE YOU JUST INTO KINKY STUFF?
THE MUZZLE. IT HAS BEEN DAMAGED! BLACK BOLT THINKS HE CAN REMOVE IT.
BUT HE MUST FIND HIS CAPTOR, AND HE DARES NOT UNLEASH HIS AWESOME POWER ON THIS RABBLE.
HE DOESN'T NEED TO.
YOU WIN, WISHBONE.
I GOTTA HAND IT TO YOU, YER TOUGHER THAN YOU LOOK. THE JAILER LIKES KILLIN' TOUGH GUYS.
HE'S GONNA LOOOVE YOU.


THAT'S THE WAY, TOUGH GUY! YOU GOT THIS! NEVER SURRENDER! NEVER LET 'EM BREAK YER SPIRIT!


YEESH. WHAT A RUBE.


BLACK BOLT HEADS DOWN THE HALLWAY. NONE OF THE OTHERS FOLLOW HIM.


WHEN HE REACHES THE BRIGHTLY LIT ROOM, HE SEES WHY.

NAME YOUR CRIMES!
REPENT YOUR CRIMES!

BLACK BOLT DOES NOT KNOW WHAT THIS CREATURE IS, BUT HE KNOWS IT IS EVIL.
AND HE KNOWS IT MUST BE STOPPED.
BLACK BOLT SPEAKS...
STOP
...AND NOTHING HAPPENS.

PENANCE IN DEATH FOR YOUR CRIMES AND VIOLATIONS!
AAAARGGHH!
THEN THERE IS THE SOUND OF A MAN SCREAMING...
AAH--
...THE SOUND OF A MAN DYING...
...AND THEN SILENCE.

HE IS A KING, BUT HE WAKES IN A PRISON MEANT FOR HIS ENEMY. A PRISON MEANT FOR HIS BROTHER.
MISTER?
MISTER! HEY, YOU MADE IT BACK! AFTER HE KILLED YOU, I MEAN. NOT EVERYBODY DOES. COOL.
THANKS FOR TRYING TO HELP ME, BY THE WAY. NOT EVERYBODY DOES THAT, EITHER. NOT THAT IT REALLY MATTERS, OF COURSE...
ANYWAY, I'M [illegible], BUT HERE I GO BY "BLINKY." WHAT'S YOUR NAME? WHAT'D YOU DO? WHO PUT YOU HERE?
I AM CALLED BLACK BOLT.
I PUT MYSELF HERE.
TO BE CONTINUED...

BLACK BOLT
LETTERS PAGE

We want to hear from you! Send your emails to **mheroes@marvel.com** and please mark them **"OKAY TO PRINT."**

Welcome to BLACK BOLT #1, the first solo series to star one of the Marvel Universe's most powerful and enigmatic characters, his (former) highness Blackagar Boltagon.

I couldn't be more thrilled to be penning this new chapter in the life of the Midnight King, though it's been a strange road here. I've been a professional writer for a decade, publishing everything from fiction to essays to poems. Newspapers have printed my words on their op-ed pages. Smart people in magazines have said nice things about my novel.

But decades before any of that, I was a wheezy, scared kid in a factory town where the schools sucked. And I learned how to read—and yes, how to write—by reading stacks of Marvel comics over and over again. Those comics not only provided me with a precocious vocabulary, they taught me to ask questions about injustice and alienation, power and position. Nowadays, nearly all my work is preoccupied with those questions. Coming to Marvel to ask them as a writer feels like coming home.

Some of the questions we will ask in BLACK BOLT in the coming months:

Who is a criminal?
What happens when we put people in cages?
How do you tell your story?
What does it mean to be a parent?

And most importantly:

What happens when extremely powerful beings hit each other with very large objects and zap each other with energy beams?

Now comes your part: We need YOUR questions. And comments! As a kid, I read the letters pages of my favorite comics obsessively. Before the Internet as we know it today existed, that's how I knew there were others out there reading the stories I was reading. Thinking about what they meant. Nitpicking their details. Letters pages let me know I wasn't alone.

We live in a different age now, one where comics readers are hyper-connected. I think that's a wonderful thing. But I hope this letters page can be a place that harkens back to those forums of yore. A place to geek out and to pick nits. A place to hear each other's voices.

-Saladin Ahmed

P.S. What's a letters page without a title?! Send use your ideas—the punnier the better!

NEXT:

BLACK BOLT #2

ROYALS #3

SECRET WARRIORS #1

SECRET WARRIORS #2

Tour
THE SEVEN SEAS
With
BLACK MANTA
EMPIRE
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